

Stress and Satisfaction attained by retirees through bridge employment in service sector

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Old age is an inevitable and universal phenomenon of human life because ageing is a natural process. Ageing is more often a process of mental attitude rather than physical changes in the body. Old age is associated with "Retirement". **Retirement** is one of the most significant events in an individual's life which influences his/her psycho – social status. It can be defined as the complete withdrawal from employment along with entitlement to income that is based on having been employed over a period of years.

Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand or resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. (Cooper, Dewe and O'Drisroll, 2002.)

After retiring from their long term career and deciding to return to the work force, adults can consider a variety of work alternatives. They have the options to pursue a part-time, a full time or a seasonal job within or outside their previous career field. The employment gained after this transition is termed as "**bridge employment**".

Researches state various implications of bridge jobs or bridge employment on retirees. In their case stress and satisfaction both form the two sides of a coin. **Firstly**, talking about **stress** in bridge employment for retirees researches state that those retirees whose transition jobs were in their career fields were more likely to have better

overall psychological wellbeing than those whose jobs were outside of their career expertise. This may be due to the fact that retirees, who engage in bridge employment in a different field, need to face the stress coming from role change and adapting to the new environment which includes different hours, working conditions, expectations, procedures and policies.

The age challenge also becomes cause of stress during bridge work. Retirees encounter subtle and direct age discrimination during their transition to a bridge job. Sometimes their careers and transition efforts are affected by others' perceptions of older workers. Sometimes other employees have lower expectations of them because they were old, sometimes younger employees question older adults capabilities.

Quinn (2000) discovered that 70% of those who switched to a bridge job moved down the socio-economic ladder in terms of both monetary and authority form. Sometimes people retire from positions of authority in which they also get handsome salaries but post-retirement in their bridge job they are paid really lower in comparison of their pre-retirement. Sometimes they get retired from authoritarian positions but in their bridge job at their same working place they might once again be managed and supervised by someone whom they might have supervised during their service which develops stress among the elderly.

Skill obsolescence also results in stress among older workers. The reason that older adults might have outdated skills could be the result of an employer's reluctance to offer training to older workers. Even the older workers might lack the appropriate technology skills and their ability to learn these new skills if questioned might lead them to stress.

Stress may also be experienced in retirees due to their personal challenges as they encounter personal situations that hamper their transition efforts including imposing self – limitations , dealing with family and friends , managing their time and coping with emotional issues. Sometimes struggle with time management would be a cause of stress.

Changes in their work lives, greatly affect their decisions which ultimately leads to stress. After a long successful work history, they sometimes see their careers unraveling because their work organization, work situation and jobs change. They sometimes get discouraged with the constant reorganizations, shifting priorities, increasing levels of bureaucracy, generational differences, changing work rules and unmet career expectations. Even if their jobs tend to be in the same career field but with a different organization, they are required to learn new procedures or policies. If luckily the bridge job is in the same organization then their adjustment process becomes easier in terms of surroundings and environment but sometimes they might feel left out at certain points where groupism of the then working staff may leave them aloof pertaining to their age. In their second innings, they might not be treated as important as it used to be in their career, initially .Attitudinal and behavioral changes of their colleagues also causes stress among the retirees. Sometimes their health also does not allow them to continue working but their poor financial conditions force them to remain in the service sector.

Another aspect of bridge employment for retirees is **satisfaction** the experience by it. Bridge employment creates an opportunity that allows retirees to use their time in a meaningful way, to fill their time, to have a say as to what they would do, to stay involved with their career and to meet their financial needs.

The increased life expectancy, the high level of dependence on social security, the poor personal savings rate and the number of workers not covered by pensions could contribute to financial insecurity among the older people. Meeting their financial needs on their own without being dependent on their families provides great sense of satisfaction to old people. They find themselves useful and economically sound even in the changing scenario. The financial needs of old age are diverse. If they do not receive social security, a bridge job is required by them to supplement their pension. Some want extra money to build up their retirement savings while others want extra money to spend on their grandchildren. Bridge job assures them same quality of life from an economic point of view which they used to enjoy pre- retirement .Through their bridge jobs, retirees continue to grow and learn, make a difference to others, demonstrate their competency and feel healthy. In some cases the death of their spouse might lead them to a lonely feeling, here bridge job helps them to lead a cheerful life as it provides them a purpose and an expanded support system.

Compared with full retirement, engaging in bridge employment might be associated with fewer major diseases and functional limitations. The continuity in their career keeps them jubilant and socially active. To be connected to their long term career proves to be of great importance for many retirees as they had invested many years in their work and they had enjoyed it. They sometimes tend to make adjustments within the changing work atmosphere in which process they tend to grow as an individual. Bridge job provides a kind of retirement internship, a new lease on life, compensation , relief from the fear of uncertainty

and most important security of their own and family's future.

If ageing is accepted with a smile and a proper balance is maintained between working conditions, familial conditions and personal situations bridge job could also act as a stress buster for the retirees.

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